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## Departure from Sign Design Standards

## DSDS-612

Application	General Data
<b>Project Name:</b> Greater Morning Star Pentecostal Church  <b>Location:</b> North side of Ritchie-Marlboro Road at its intersection with Sansbury Road, known as 17100 Ritchie-Marlboro Road.  <b>Applicant/Address:</b> Greater Morning Star Pentecostal Church 4417 Dix St., N.E. Washington, D.C. 20019 ATTN: Bishop Charles E. Johnson	Date Accepted: 2/13/04
	Planning Board Action Limit: NA
	Plan Acreage: 54
	Zone: I-3
	Dwelling Units: NA
	Square Footage: 47
	Planning Area: 73
	Tier: Developing
	Council District: 06
	Municipality: N/A
200-Scale Base Map: 202SE09	

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Departure to add an additional freestanding sign	Adjoining Property Owners Previous Parties of Record Registered Associations: (CB-12-2003)
	Sign(s) Posted on Site: 09/21/04

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Laxmi Srinivas	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

October 13, 2004

**TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:**

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Jimi Jones, Acting Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Laxmi Srinivas, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **Departure from Sign Design Standards Application No. 612.**

REQUEST: **Departure to add one additional freestanding sign.**

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval with conditions**

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NOTE: The Planning Board has scheduled this application for a public hearing on the agenda date indicated above. The Planning Board also encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record in this application. Requests to become a person of record should be made in writing and addressed to the Development Review Division at the address indicated above. Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

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A. **Location and Field Inspection:** The subject property is located on the north side of Ritchie-Marlboro Road, west of White House Road and east of the new Capital Beltway off ramp, known as 1700 Ritchie-Marlboro Road. The subject property comprises approximately 54 acres of land. The property was previously known as the Greenwood Manor Subdivision. The applicant has obtained approvals for a church on the subject property. Access to the property is from two entrances along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. Approval has been obtained for one freestanding sign along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. The property is zoned I-3, and it has 120 feet of street frontage on Ritchie-Marlboro Road.

B. **Development Data Summary:**

	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
Zone(s)	I-3	I-3
Use(s)	Vacant	Church
Acreage	54	54
Signs	1 freestanding (approved)	1 freestanding
Sign Area	47 SF	47 SF
Sign Height	6'	6'

C. **History:** On September 4, 1997, the Planning Board approved Conceptual Site Plan CSP-96073 for the proposed church (PGCPB No. 97-224). On January 22, 1998, the Planning Board approved a preliminary plan for the subject property (PGCPB No. 97-364). On September 5, 2002, the Planning Board approved Detailed Site Plan DSP-02018 for the proposed church (PGCPB No.02-185). One freestanding sign adjacent to the eastern entrance along Ritchie-Marlboro Road was approved as part of the detailed site plan.

D. **Master Plan Recommendation:** The 1990 Largo-Lottsford Master Plan retains the subject property in the I-3 Zone. The master plan does not address signs but the master plan guidelines state that attention should be paid to the aesthetics of proposals for properties in the I-3 Zone that adjoin major roads.

E. **Request:** The applicant is requesting an additional sign along the western entrance along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. The proposed sign is identical to the sign approved as part of Detailed Site Plan DSP-02018. The proposed sign will have a total area of 47 square feet and does not exceed the maximum permitted sign area of 48 square feet.

F. **Surrounding Uses:** The property is surrounded by the following uses:

North: Single-family residential uses in the R-O-S Zone

West: Single-family residential uses in the R-O-S Zone and industrial office uses in the I-3 Zone

South: Ritchie-Marlboro Road—residential uses and open space in the R-A and R-R Zones

East: Single-family residential uses in the R-80 Zone

**G. Sign Requirements:**

1. **Subdivision 2, Signs for Specific Uses, Section 27-617 (Institutional Other than Temporary) allows a sign to be erected on the institutional property. Institutional signs shall meet the following design standards:**

- (1) **Maximum area for each sign—48 square feet**
- (2) **Maximum height—8 feet above finished grade at the base of the sign**
- (3) **Minimum setback—15 feet from adjoining land in any residential zone**
- (4) **Type allowed—freestanding or attached to a building**
- (5) **Maximum number—One per street the property fronts on**

The approved and proposed freestanding signs have a 47-square-foot sign area. The height of the signs above finished grade is six feet. The signs will be set back more than 15 feet from adjoining land in any residential zone. The subject departure from sign design standards is for one additional freestanding sign.

5. **Section 27-589 contains the following purposes for regulating signs:**

- (1) **To promote the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the Regional District.**
- (2) **To encourage and protect the appropriate use of land, buildings, and structures.**
- (3) **To regulate unsightly and detrimental signs which could depreciate the value of property and discourage quality development in the Regional District.**
- (4) **To regulate signs which are a hazard to safe motor-vehicle operation.**
- (5) **To eliminate structurally unsafe signs which endanger a building, structure, or the public.**
- (6) **To prevent the proliferation of signs that could detract from the scenic qualities of the landscape or the attractiveness of development.**
- (7) **To control the location and size of signs, so as to provide for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with land uses in the Regional District.**

The proposed sign is a monument sign with colors that match the building colors. It is identical to the approved identification sign. It will have a brick base and will be illuminated with spotlights. The church logo and lettering will be metal raised letters. The overall design of the sign is subdued and compatible with the institutional use of the property. The sign does not attract undue attention and will be compatible with the overall streetscape along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. Adequate landscaping will be proposed along the base of the sign to enhance the appearance of the sign along the street.

H. **Required Findings:**

(A) **Section 27-239.01(b)(9)** of the Zoning Ordinance provides that in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

**1. The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.**

The applicant is requesting relief from Section 27-617, Institutional Signs, of the Zoning Ordinance, which allows one freestanding sign per street frontage. As a result of the distance from the nearby intersection of the Capital Beltway interchange and Ritchie-Marlboro Road, coupled with the orientation of the building on site, the applicant is proposing an additional sign to allow the church to be more safely identified by motorists. Since the property has two entrances along Ritchie-Marlboro Road, a sign adjacent to each entrance will help identify the entrances along the road. The additional sign will help orient the motorists to the entrances to the property and promote safety along Ritchie-Marlboro Road.

In general, the purposes of the sign ordinance are to regulate unsightly and hazardous signs, to provide adequate identification and advertisement, to promote the general welfare of the residents of the county, and to foster the appropriate use of land, buildings and structures. The proposed additional sign will provide adequate identification and advertisement for the second entrance along Ritchie-Marlboro Road and ensure safety of the motorists along the road. The proposed sign is a monument sign and the location, size and design of the sign are appropriate for easy identification along the street.

Therefore, the purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal.

**2. The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.**

The applicant is requesting a departure for one more additional sign to identify the second entrance along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. The additional sign is necessary to provide adequate identification and advertisement for the second entrance along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. Therefore, the departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.

**3. The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances that are unique to the site or prevalent in areas of the county developed prior to November 29, 1949.**

The subject site is located very close to the intersection of the Capital Beltway interchange and Ritchie-Marlboro Road. Also, due to the orientation of the church building on the site, the church is not directly visible from Ritchie-Marlboro Road. The proposed additional sign will help identify the church and the two entrances for the church along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. The proposed sign and the previously approved sign will ensure easy identification of the entrances and ensure safety of the motorists on the road. Therefore, the departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site.

**4. The departure will not impair the visual quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.**

The proposed sign is a monument sign with colors that match the building colors. It is identical to the approved identification sign. It will have a brick base and will be illuminated with spotlights. The church logo and lettering will be metal raised letters. The overall design of the sign is subdued and compatible with the institutional use of the property. The sign does not attract undue attention and will be compatible with the overall streetscape along Ritchie-Marlboro Road. Adequate landscaping will be proposed along the base of the sign to enhance the appearance of the sign along the street.

**I. Referral Comments:**

1. In a memorandum dated March 17, 2004, the Permits Review Section has stated that the area of the sign must be provided and a revision to DSP-02018 must be approved for the additional sign. Conditions of approval have been added to require the same.
2. In a memorandum dated March 3, 2004, the Urban Design Review Section has stated that the setback of the sign from the road must be shown. A condition of approval has been added to require the same.
3. In a memorandum dated March 12, 2004, the Transportation Planning Section has stated that they have no comments regarding the subject application.
4. In a memorandum dated February 26, 2004, the Historic Preservation Section has stated that the proposal will have no effect on historic resources. The subject site was part of the large antebellum landholdings.
5. In a memorandum dated March 29, 2004, the Community Planning Division has stated that the approved 1990 Largo-Lottsford Master Plan does not address signs but provides guidelines that state that extraordinary attention should be paid to the aesthetics of proposals for properties in the I-3 Zone along major roads. The proposed sign is compatible with the overall streetscape along Ritchie-Marlboro Road.
6. In a memorandum dated February 24, 2004, the Environmental Planning Section has stated that the proposal will not impact any of the environmental features found on this property and will not impact the approved Type II Tree Conservation Plan, TCPII/53/02.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed additional freestanding monument sign represents a balance between the need to provide adequate identification and the responsibility to control the location and size of signs, so as to provide for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with land uses in Prince Georges County.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the requested departure from sign design standards for an additional sign DSDS-612, subject to the following conditions:

Prior to certification of the DSDS application,

1. The total area of the proposed freestanding sign shall be shown on the site plan.
2. The setback of the sign from the property line and the ultimate right-of-way line shall be shown on the site plan.
3. The applicant shall obtain approval of a revision to Detailed Site Plan DSP-02018 to include the additional sign.